

Remarks

Reconsideration of this application and entry of this amendment after final is respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-26 were presented. Claims 1 and 2 are canceled, without prejudice, and claims 3, 7 and 14-23 are amended. Accordingly, after entry of this amendment, claims 3-26 are pending.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 112

Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 112, for failing to provide antecedent basis for multiple recitations of “personal information”. The rejection of claim 1 is moot since claim 1 is canceled. Claim 7 is amended to recite “...personal information storing means for storing *first* personal information...” and “personal information input means for entering *second* personal information...” in order to distinguish between the two types of personal information and thereby overcome the rejection.

Claims 15-23 are amended on applicant’s initiative to reflect that claim 14, from which claims 15-23 depend, recites a “system” and not a “station”.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

Claims 1-26 are rejected as obvious over Schumacher et al. (US 6,269,446) (“Schumacher”) in view of Kuwano et al. (US 2002/0059231) (“Kuwano”).

Schumacher authenticates images from digital cameras with GPS derived time and location data (Abstract; Col. 1, line 66 – Col. 2, line 3). The GPS-derived data and device information is added and stored in the header (Col. 2, lines 4-12; FIG. 4). As acknowledged by the Action, Schumacher does not disclose authentication of the images with user ID and password information. However, the Action now cites Kuwano, which discloses a system of filing image data in a network of filing in which image data may be authenticated by user information such as user ID and password (Par. 0104).

The combination of Schumacher and Kuwano, however, still does not teach or suggest a key feature of the present invention: that the digital signature is affixed to the image data by a physically separate authentication station that is connected to the authentication apparatus only when authenticating data. The authentication station affixes the digital signature only when the authentication data provided by the authentication apparatus correlates with (satisfies a prescribed relationship with) authentication data separately stored in the authentication station.

Independent claims 3 and 14 are amended as follows to include this distinguishing feature:

“...wherein the authenticating station is physically separate from the authenticating apparatus and is connected to the authenticating apparatus only when authenticating data.”

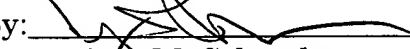
Since this feature is not disclosed or suggested by Schumacher and Kuwano, claims 3 and 14 are not rendered obvious by Schumacher and Kuwano. Claims 4-13 and 15-26 are similarly allowable by virtue of their dependence on claims 3 and 14.

Conclusion

This application is now believed to be in form for allowance. The examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
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